

Children in Peril

Abuse and Neglect Threaten Children and Their Future



Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect

Too many children in our county are endangered by abuse and neglect, a serious threat to their well-being now and through adulthood. Most of the victims are under age 5 and, even more disturbing, a majority of those who die from abuse are under age 4. Nearly a third of abused or neglected children will later abuse their own children, continuing the horrible cycle. While our rate of abuse of young children in Palm Beach County is down slightly from 2008, there were still more than 3,300 child victims of all ages in 2013.

Toxic Stress Hinders a Child's Abilities

The mental health of parents and caregivers is vital to children's brain growth and overall development. We may not be able to see a child's mind expand, the intricate brain architecture forming, but we can certainly see the results. When children suffer from "toxic stress" – prolonged stress that comes from living in emotionally unstable or physically unsafe homes – their ability to thrive in school is greatly hindered. They often lack the tools needed to regulate their own behavior, solve problems and appropriately handle adverse situations. All of these are risk factors for learning and developmental delays, as well as later violence and criminal activity.

The Long-Term Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect

We all understand the harm severe physical abuse can cause, but the consequences of abuse and neglect go far beyond the physical. Abuse is complex and often includes a variety of interrelated problems that impact children physically, psychologically, behaviorally and socially. Psychological problems may appear as high-risk behaviors including smoking, alcohol or drug abuse or overeating. Studies of adverse childhood experiences have shown correlations between child maltreatment and adult health and well-being, including various illnesses and poor health outcomes.¹

When a child endures abuse and neglect, our whole community suffers. We all pay the costs when children don't reach their full potential, because they need special education, additional health services, mental health or substance abuse treatment or end up in the criminal justice system.

"Child abuse and neglect have been shown to cause important regions of the brain to fail to form or grow properly, resulting in impaired development."²

The Data



Children who experience child abuse & neglect are about

9 times more likely

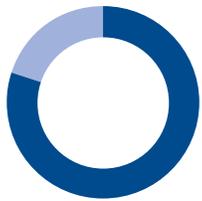
to become involved in criminal activity.³



As many as two-thirds of the

people in treatment

for drug abuse reported being abused or neglected as children.



About 80% of

21-year-olds

who were abused as children met criteria for at least one psychological disorder.



Abused children are 25% more likely to experience

teen pregnancy.



14% of all men and **36%** of all women

in prison in the U.S. were abused as children. This is about twice the frequency seen in the general population.



The estimated annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States is

\$124 billion⁴.



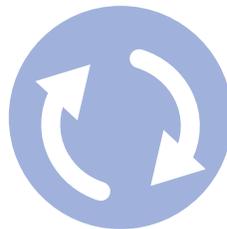
Who are the Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect?

Child abuse occurs at every socio-economic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.

NATIONALLY



More than 70% of **children who die** are under the age of 4.



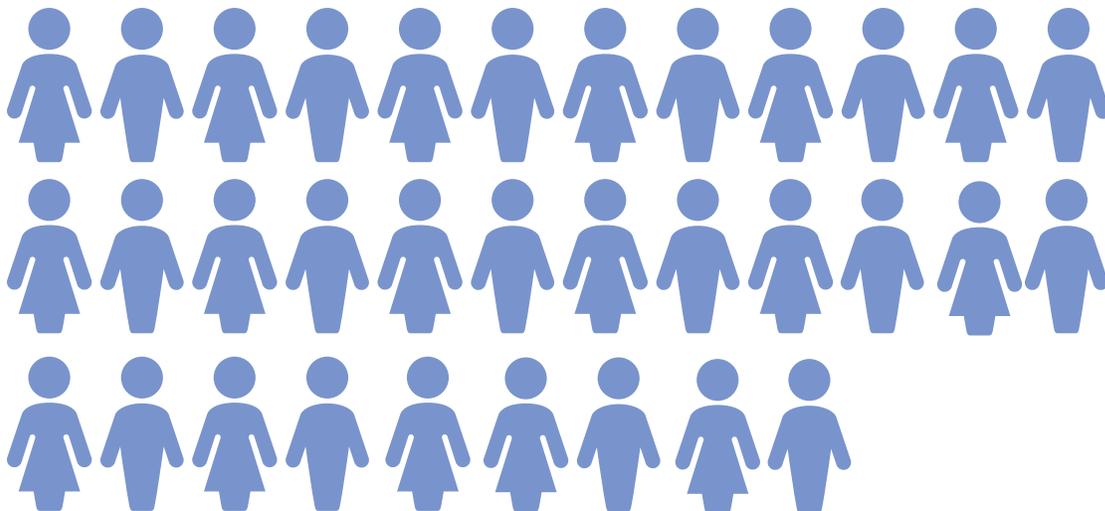
About 30% of abused and neglected children **will later abuse** their own children.



One-third to two-thirds of child maltreatment cases involve **substance abuse** to some degree.⁵

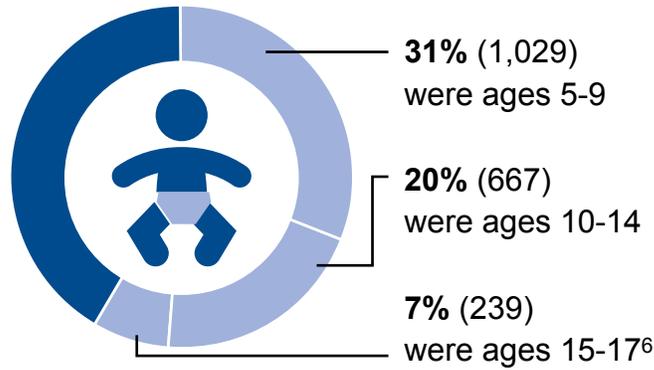
PALM BEACH COUNTY

A total of **3,319 children** were victims of child abuse and neglect in 2013.



Young Children

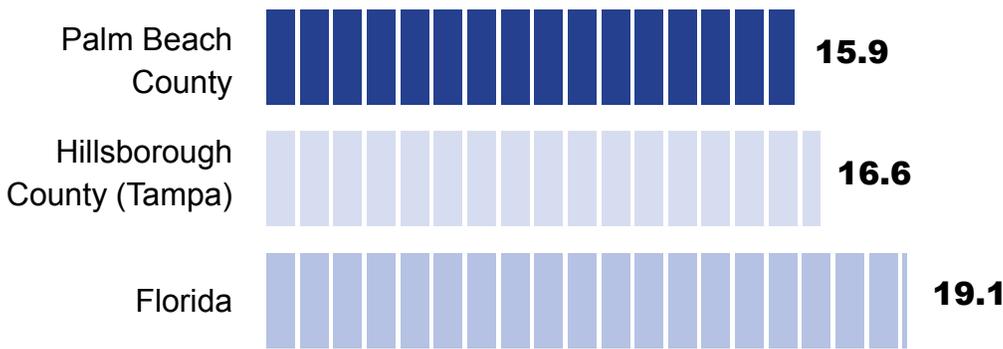
41% (1,372) of the victims involved children birth through 4 years of age.



Rate Of Abuse In Palm Beach County

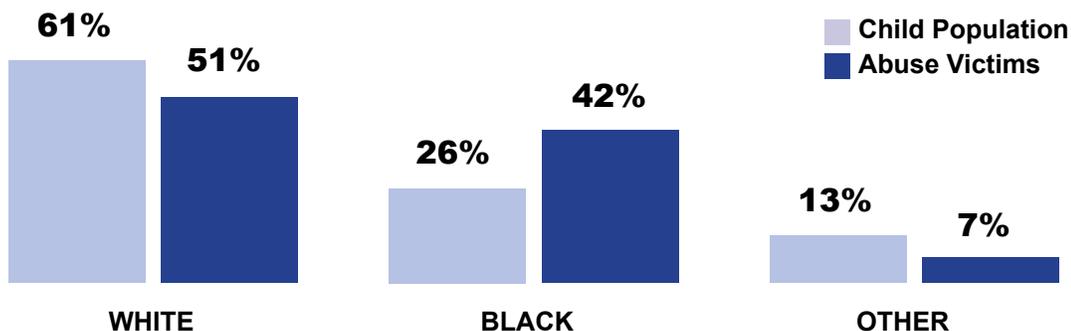
RATE OF VERIFIED ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Palm Beach County’s rate of abuse for children birth through five was 15.9 (per 1,000) in FY 2013, down 1.8 from 2008.⁷



RACE OF VICTIMS

Forty-two (42%) percent of verified maltreatment victims in Palm Beach County were black children, while blacks represent 26% of the total child population.



Child Abuse and Neglect Take Many Forms

The top three maltreatments in Palm Beach County from July 1 to December 31, 2013, representing 72% of the total abuse cases, were:

**Family
Violence
Threatens
Child**

**Substance
Misuse**

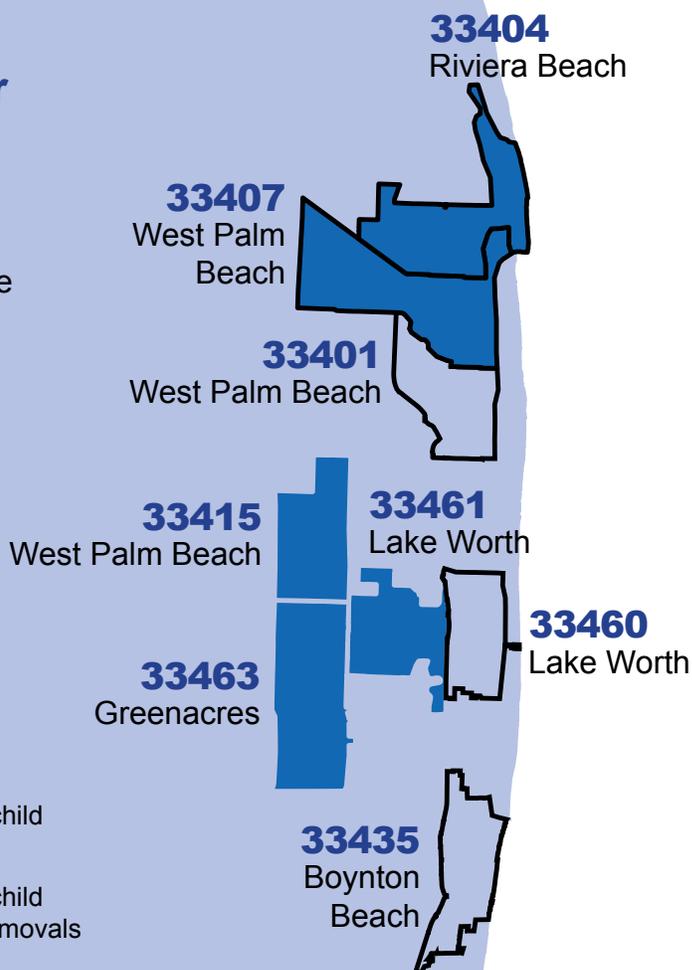
**Inadequate
Supervision**

Areas with Highest Number of Cases

The five ZIP Codes with the highest number of investigations and the five with the highest number of children removed from their homes, from July 1 to December 31, 2013, are shown.⁸

KEY

- Top 5 highest number of child protective investigations
- Top 5 highest number of child protective investigation removals



What is Children's Service Council Doing?

Children's Services Council Prevention Approach

Children's Services Council provides leadership, funding, services and research on behalf of the county's children so they grow up healthy, safe and strong. Our four primary goals are:

- *Babies are Born Healthy*
- *Children are Safe from Abuse and Neglect*
- *Children are Ready for Kindergarten*
- *Children Have Access to Quality Afterschool and Summer Programs*

Through our overall prevention approach, Children's Services Council works to reduce child abuse and neglect by helping new parents and babies be healthy, providing quality child care environments and access to safe afterschool and summer programs. In 2013:

- 77,000 children and families were served directly through our prevention programs.⁹

Community and Targeted Child Abuse Prevention

In our focus on keeping children safe from abuse and neglect, Children's Services Council offers countywide parenting programs and targets geographic areas, particularly those where children are at increased risk, to help parents. Children's Services Council programs focus on families with young children. In 2013:

- \$10 million in funding was directed to programs to prevent or decrease child abuse and neglect.¹⁰
- 95% - 99% of children in our child abuse prevention programs were safe from abuse and neglect.¹¹

"The more we do to help parents become better parents and keep them out of the child welfare system, the more we all benefit."



Parenting Programs

The more we do to help parents become better parents and keep them out of the child welfare system, the more we all benefit. Children's Services Council offers free parenting classes across the county to help parents better understand child behavior and development, enhance their skills and promote secure attachments. Our proven programs also help parents promote their young child's social-emotional ability, self-regulation and critical thinking skills.

EXPANDED TRIPLE P PROGRAM

During 2013 we expanded our Triple P program, Children's Services Council's positive parenting program, to serve more families across the county. Nearly 2,100 Palm Beach County families successfully completed one level of Triple P in 2013, impacting thousands of children.¹²

NEW PARENTING PROGRAMS

Children's Services Council also is embarking on some exciting new programs to help parents:

The Incredible Years Program helps parents of young children - infant to preschool - promote their child's social, emotional and academic skills, as well as their own knowledge of child development. It also fosters parents' involvement in their child's school, helps them lessen conduct problems and address developmental concerns.

The Child First Program is an intensive, early childhood program that targets high-need families and young children early to help connect them with services, combat toxic stress and build the parent-child relationship with the goal of preventing abuse and neglect.

BRIDGES Programs Operate in 10 Neighborhoods Across the County

We work in partnership with our lead agencies, Community Partners and Children's Home Society of Florida, to operate BRIDGES throughout Palm Beach County. The community-based hubs increase healthy births,

decrease child abuse and increase school readiness. Seven of our BRIDGES programs are located in the neighborhoods with high numbers of child protective investigations and removals. Another three are strategically located to provide targeted services in Lake Park, Pahokee and Belle Glade. BRIDGES served 2,664 parents with children birth to age 8 in 2013.¹³

HOW DO BRIDGES WORK?



- Engage the community to help identify and solve problems
- Provide support services to families and focus on pregnant women and parents of young children
- Link with local elementary schools

Child Advocacy Programs

Children's Services Council provides critical support to children and families in the child welfare system through the Relative Caregiver Project and the Juvenile and Foster Care Projects, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County.

- **The Relative Caregiver Project** offers legal services to relative caregivers including obtaining legal custody, guardianship or adoption services. A total of 214 children were served during 2013.
- **The Foster Children's Project** represents children birth to age 12 and their siblings who are placed in the custody of the State of Florida. An attorney from Foster Children's Project represents the child in all court proceedings to ensure the child reaches permanency - whether through re-unification with parents or adoption - within the time frames prescribed by law. A total of 661 children were served by the program in 2013.
- **The Juvenile Advocacy Project** provides direct legal and advocacy services to at-risk children who may be part of the dependency or delinquency systems or be in need of advocacy due to a disability, or an educational or mental health issue. Nearly 300 children were served by the program in 2013.¹⁴

Other Prevention Services

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

We help pregnant women, and moms and dads with newborns and young children, get off to the best start. Children's Services Council's Healthy Beginnings System offers pregnant women access to prenatal care and provides home visits to parents with newborns, services and referrals, assessments and follow-up. Our partnership with Home Safe and Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies of Palm Beach County provides an entryway to the maternal health system and services.

Effective Home Visiting Programs Help Parents

The **Nurse-Family Partnership Program**, offered by The Florida Department of Health/Palm Beach County Health Department, **Healthy Families Program**, provided by Families First, and **Parent-Child Home Program** through by the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County, provide home visits to parents in need. The health department's **Prenatal Plus Program** works to prevent low birth weight babies and promotes a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy and beyond — discouraging the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. These programs provide a foundation for new parents, promote child development and readiness for school, and prevent child abuse and neglect. For a link to all our Healthy Beginnings Programs visit: <http://providers.cscpbcc.org/direct-programs>.

MENTAL HEALTH

Children's Services Council redesigned its mental health services to address maternal depression, toxic stress, domestic violence and parents' concerns about their young child's development. The services target pregnant women, parents with young children and children birth to 5. They are designed to aid the parent/child relationship and the individual needs of the parent or child.

SAFE CHILD AND AFTERSCHOOL CARE

We provide quality care to low-income families who need a safe place for their children while they work. Quality child care also helps distressed families who may need care to get health and social services. More than 16,000 children and families were helped with quality child care last year in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County and Family Central.¹⁴

Quality child care helps young children get ready for kindergarten. Children's Services Council also provides access to safe afterschool care for school-age children by working with PrimeTime Palm Beach County to promote quality programs. More than 10,000 children, ages 5-12, were served through CSC scholarships and matching funds to the Early Learning Coalition during 2012-2013 CSC fiscal year.¹⁵

WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

Children's Services Council works with other entities in the county to emphasize prevention. We work collaboratively with the Florida Department of Children and Families, judges, ChildNet, the Guardian ad Litem, Children's Home Society and many other local social services organizations to examine the social service system and prevent child abuse. We select the best agencies to deliver our funded programs, which go through a rigorous review process and are held accountable for their outcomes.

Conclusion

We will continue to work with our community partners to bring awareness to the tragedy of abuse and neglect and find effective solutions. We will continue our prevention programming, monitor the data in our community and support parents who need help. Ultimately, child abuse is our entire community's responsibility.

For more information about Children's Services Council programs for children and families, visit: <http://families.cscpsc.org/>

PUBLISHED MAY 2014

References

1 Child Welfare Information Gateway, Children's Bureau/ACYF/ACF/HHS, Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect, July 2013. https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheet/sp_long_term_consequences.cfm.

2 Ibid.

3 Gold, Wolan Sullivan, & Lewis, 2011. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2013). Child Maltreatment 2012. Available from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

4 Childhelp.org: national data

5 Ibid.

6 Percent of Children by Race Trend Report, Department of Children and Families, Child Welfare Trend Reports <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/DataReports/TrendReports.shtml>.

7 Community Indicators for CSC Sentinel Outcomes Summary, 2014, Business Analytics Department, Children's Services Council.

8 DCF Report Card for July – December 2013, Circuit 15 Palm Beach County Southeast Region.

9 Information from Business Analytics, regarding numbers served in CSC programs 2013.

10 Report from Business Analytics Department, April 2014.

11 Table 6b. Business Analytics, CSC, March 2014.

12 E-mail from Program Division, CSC

13 E-mail regarding number served at BRIDGES 2013, March 10, 2014, Research Department, CSC.

14 Information from Business Analytics, regarding numbers served in CSC programs 2013.

15 E-mail from Program Division, regarding number of afterschool children served. 12/19/2013.



Who We Are

Children's Services Council, a special district created by Palm Beach County voters, provides leadership, funding, services and research on behalf of the county's children so they grow up healthy, safe and strong.

How We Work

To make the biggest impact possible, we focus on prenatal care and early childhood development so more Palm Beach County children are born healthy, are safe from abuse and neglect, are ready to learn when they enter school and have access to quality afterschool programming.

To reach these goals we fund local nonprofit and other agencies, which provide proven, high-quality services to our county's children and their families.

How You Benefit

Because of the wise investment Palm Beach County residents make in Children's Services Council, our children are given the fundamental tools for success early in life, making them much more likely to:

- Reach vital growth and developmental milestones
- Graduate from high school
- Become productive members of society.

This does more than save us all money. It builds the foundation for a strong, safe community we are proud to live in. www.cscpbc.org